7:Columbia U. S-4, 5 1956 RHl , CaucasiaRHl
Georgia RI I
Swan

C. G. 361 342 over the wooden lattice of the horizontal roof frame. These flat roofs are also much used for growing cereals, vegetables, curing meat, etc. The sakhli is also the common type of house in most parts of Anatolia and Iran, where we also find the staircase-like arrangement of the sakhlis on the mountain slopes.

C. G. 628 These are the lands where the kings of Sak'art'velo or the Emirs and Khans of Shirvan and Arran had no say, nor did the Caliph in Baghdad or the Roman Emperor have any authority, with the result that feuds were fought right on the spot. Thus, there were times when not only one aul fought another, but even one clan or family fought another within the same aul. Hence the many small castles; hence a man always carried his kinzhal; hence such customs as the vendetta, the qan-alma (Turkic: "taking of blood"), which have been preserved

C. G. 631 there down to the present time. Svanet'ia consists of three small lands: Free Svanet'ia, Svanet'ia of the Dadishkeliani, and Svanet'ia of the Dadiani, the latter two named after the families of their former overlords. Many

C. G. 771 pagan elements are found in the Eastern Orthodox religion of these valiant mountaineers, although to a lesser degree than is true of the Oset'i, as mentioned above, or some of the Dagestanians, who were later converted to Islam.

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FOLK RELIGION

C. G. 771 177 The major religions in the Caucasus are Christianity (Georgians except Adzhar and Ingilo; Armenians except Hemshily; Ossetes except Digor; Udi) and Islam (all the rest, except the Mountain Jews and Yezid). But many traces of the older pagan religious view remain. Among the mountaineers in the N. W. Caucasus Islam was introduced comparatively recently (seventeenth century), and in many cases reached only the upper classes. In Dagestan, with its stronger Islamic tradition, the ancient beliefs have disappeared to a much larger extent. In Georgia, Christianity has absorbed many pagan features, and among the Kartvelian mountaineers it was rather paganism that adopted certain outward characteristics of Christianity. In the N. W. Caucasus, the pre-Islamic pagan religion preserved curious vestiges of Christianity which had been introduced from Georgia in the time of queen Tamar, and perhaps even earlier. Here and there in the Caucasus there are remains of the influence of Zoroastrianism.

C. G. 778 The old Caucasian religion was closely connected with family and sib organization. It centered around the house-hearth, above which hung the cooking pot, suspended from an iron chain (Georg. sak'ide(be)li), which had a symbolic value and was believed to be endowed with supernatural powers. It could not

C. G. 793 hereditary rights. The priest, called khevis beri "elder of the valley," khutsi "priest" or dek'anozi "dean," pronounced the ceremonial C. G. [782] prayers and sacrificed the sheep and cows offered as victims. The kadagi or dzhvaris C. G. [791] meene "interpreter," "tongue of the dzhvari," a kind of shaman, pronounced the will of the khat'i. The medroshe "standard bearer" or khat'is pekhi "foot of the khat'i" carried the sacred banner (drosha) on festive days. A special functionary attended to the brewing of the sacred beer, a custom borrowed from the C. G. [795] Ossetes. The beer was drunk at the annual festivals which were attended by all the "serfs" of the khat'i.

In Svanetia the functions of the Khevsur khevis beri were performed by priests not regularly ordained and without any theological training; they were called bap (from Greek C. G. [771] pappas). The numerous ancient churches were neglected and were only used for storing the vessels, vestments and books relating to the divine service; these were jealously C. G. 796 guarded from alienation. Many originally Christian feasts and Saint's days were celebrated with prayers, drinking of home-made brandy and eating of sacrificed animals and C. G. [769] fancy bread of different traditional shapes. Similar rites were observed on the commemoration days of the dead which were performed at fixed intervals.

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C. 771 [783] Traces of Zoroastrianism are preserved in the idea of the uncleanness of women, especially when menstruating or with child, and of corpses, as found among the Georgian mountaineers; further in some Georgian words, e. g. dzhodzhokheti "hell" (cf. M. Pers. C. G. [778] dushakhw). Remnants of Christianity in the N. W. Caucasus were the custom of planting a cross in the ground near a sacred grove, or hanging it in a sacred tree before a C. G. [805] ceremony; further the seven-day week and the names of the days, which are partly translations or mutilations of Greek names. In Abkhazia a number of Byzantine churches have been preserved.

THE RELIGION OF THE OSSETS

C. O. 771 177

The majority of the Ossets profess the orthodox Christian religion. Only a small minority, the Digors, in the western part of the country, are Mohammedans. However, both religions appear mixed to a large extent with old pagan conceptions, rites and customs. The Christians know the names of Christ (Digor Kiriste, Iran Tshysysti), the "Mother Mary" and some of the Christian saints; they go to church and observe certain Christian rites, holidays and fasts; but at the same time they worship and pray to their pagan gods and spirits, sacrificing oxen, goats and sheep, and keep their old pagan holidays.

In a similar way the Mohammedans have a very superficial connection with the Mohammedan religion. They know the name of the prophet, perform the prescribed ablutions, keep Friday as a holiday and Ramazan, the month of fasting. However, like the Christians, they also worship their old pagan gods and celebrate their own traditional festivals.

C. O. 776

Both Christian and Mohammedan Ossets believe in the existence of a high God, an invisible Supreme Being, ruling the world from heaven. His name is Khutsau, and he is often called "the God of the Gods." But the Ossets have only a very vague idea of his nature. They are primarily devoted to the cult of deities which are closer to their hearts and to their

c. o. 796 hearth-fire, and the master of the house recites a long prayer in which he gives thanks to God and asks for blessings for the coming year. During the night the young people go from house to house, throwing corn into the houses, singing and expressing good wishes for prosperity and happiness. At daybreak of New Year's day the master of the house kindles a fire of straw in the courtyard in honor of his deceased parents, who thereby are provided with the necessary fire for the whole year. The day is spent in much merry making, eating and drinking.

c. o. 796 782 776 Only one day, the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year, is dedicated to the worship of an evil spirit, the Devil. The ceremony starts in the evening with the killing of a lamb in front of the door of the house. The spirit is invoked not to do any harm to the cattle and to the other property of the master of the house and to accept an offering of a piece of roasted meat of a lamb and a glass of brandy. During that night one should strictly avoid mentioning the name of the Supreme God, lest the wrath of the evil spirit be provoked. The Devil proper of the Ossets, who is called Khairag is like the well-known figure of the devil of other countries, a good-natured foolish fellow who can easily be duped (der dumme Teufel in German).

c. o. 771 177 This survey* of the most characteristic features of the religion of the Ossets,

*[cf. cat. 116, pp 565-574 -- Analyst]

771 their deities, their ways of worship and their
177 festivals, shows clearly that it is a rather sober and primitive pagan religion with a thin surface of a few superficially adopted features of Christianity and Islam. It is most significant, that it is almost entirely devoid of the conception and the worship of God as a Supreme Being, and that only guardian spirits are invoked to grant protection, happiness and prosperity. It is moreover noteworthy that in this religion of tribes of Iranian origin, who have preserved a richly developed Iranian language partly archaic in character, there are to be found scarcely any distinct traits of an older form of Iranian religion. On the other hand, it can be stated that some of the characteristic conceptions of the Ossetic religion are similar to those of the religions of neighboring Caucasian tribes.

769 An essential part of any religious belief
775 is represented by the conception of death and the fate of the soul in the life to come. We have already mentioned that the soul of the deceased continues its existence as the guardian spirit of its former family. He takes care of the well-being of the family, and according to an old custom, the Ossets twice a year arrange a feast in the woods in honor of the spirit, which is accompanied by the offering of food and drink. They believe that at the time when a
761 person is sick, a tribunal of six men is formed in Heaven to decide whether this person should die. If the decision is in the affirmative, death

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659 Georgia (where there are large Armenian communities), were without religious leadership for many years. Since the early 1950's, however, there have been certain changes. It seems that there has been some relaxation on the part of the Government in respect to religious affairs. It has allowed the opening of a seminary in Echmiadzin where studies for the priesthood are pursued, apparently without hindrance, and probably with some aid from the Government. Last October a new Catholicos was elected, and on that occasion a number of Armenians from abroad were allowed to visit Soviet Armenia. The general impression of these observers from the West seems to be somewhat favorable, though they admit that the Government still does not allow the erection of new churches, nor permit the repair of old ones. One exception seems to have been made. The historic cathedral of Echmiadzin is reported to have been repaired recently at Government cost. Still this does not mean that the policy of the Government has changed radically towards religion and towards the Church.

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771 Armenians have always been profoundly religious. They have associated the Church so closely with the nation that without the one they can hardly think of the other. For them, as well as for most peoples of the Middle East, religious affinities run parallel to ethnic similarities. Not many Armenians think of their religion without thinking of their nationality. That perhaps is the reason why the supreme head of

7:Columbia U. S-4, 5 1956 RHl Caucasia RHl
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771 the Armenian Apostolic Church, although his seat is in Soviet Armenia, can lay claim to the spiritual allegiance of all Armenians everywhere, and all Armenians feel that such allegiance is their duty to the incumbent of that office.

Chechens. They at first accepted the leadership of the Sheikh Uzun Hadji who proclaimed himself Imam and Emir of the Northern Caucasus. The Emir was the ally of the communists in the struggle against the White Guards of General Denikin. Having vanquished the White armies, the Bolsheviks dropped the Imam, but they were unable to cope with Chechen nationalism. The Chechens demanded the expulsion of all Russians who in the course of the last century had settled in their 'living space'. Pending a positive answer to this request Chechen nationalist bands terrorized the Russian population of the area beyond endurance. In the early twenties the Russian settlers in Chechenia sent a complaint to Moscow on account of the endless raids and murders perpetrated by Chechen bands, and petitioned that they be disarmed. Mikhail Kalinin went personally to the Caucasus and attempted to calm down both Russians and Chechens. With carefully chosen words he tried to persuade them to live together in peace, to intermarry and to respect each other's customs.[6]

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Whilst in consequence of Kalinin's personal intervention banditry stopped in Chechenia, it would seem that Moslem opposition to the Soviet régime was never quite suppressed. In 1931 the little country still had 2,675 mosques and Arab schools, as well as 1,250 mullahs, 34 sheikhs and 250 religious elders. The mullahs who were powerful opponents of the Soviet régime even managed to keep alive the illegal Shariah courts which were camouflaged as 'reconciliation commissions'.[7]

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The hostile attitude of the Chechens towards the Soviet Russian régime was often manifested in the readiness to credit the most fantastic anti-Russian rumours. Thus, in the early thirties, there existed a widespread belief that Kunta Hadji – the head of a popular Moslem sect who had died at the end of the nineteenth century – was still alive and was soon to return to Chechenia, where he would found a State based on Moslem religious law. Apparently the Chechens did not differentiate between Czarist and Bolshevik Russia in their hopes that Kunta Hadji would appear as Messiah, for it was he who had led them in the risings against Czarism in 1864 and 1877, for which he was exiled to Novgorod.

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The Ingush, whose fate Soviet policy had coupled with that of the Chechens, showed themselves no less loyal to Islam. A delegate who represented Ingushetia at the 'Second All-Union Conference of Godless Pedagogists' in 1931, stated that the influence of the Moslem clergy was still so strong among the Ingush that children refused to learn from books which they believed to be anti-religious. Whenever a teacher tried to introduce anti-religious propaganda he encountered a hostile attitude among school children and there were cases in which teachers had even to leave the school for having criticized Islam. The work of the secular Soviet schools, where the children were taught in the winter, was counteracted by the Moslem schools where the young Ingush would learn

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Ca 771 [870] during the summer holidays all that the Soviet authorities wished them to disregard. A number of Ingush party and Communist Youth League members, instead of working against the influence of religion, used themselves to go to the mosques to pray.[7]

Ca 447 191 The difficulties existing between the Soviet authorities and the Chechens and Ingush[1] were not exclusively due to the Bolshevik failure to understand the importance of the religious factor in the life of the mountaineers. There were also extraordinary difficulties of a technical nature, due to the fact that the directives of the central administration were issued in the Russian language and therefore did not reach the Chechen-Ingush masses. Being unable fully to understand the orders received, the local Soviet organs either could not carry them out, or falsified the decisions of the party and of the administration.[8]

GROZNY – THE OIL CITY

Ca 178 It was the tremendous dead weight of the predominantly Russian capital of Chechenia that prevented the implementation of any genuine Chechen autonomy and finally spelled the doom of the Chechen people. The actual liquidation of the Chechens would probably not have occurred had not the largest town in their homeland become an oil city, and indeed, one of the most important oil centres of the U.S.S.R.

Ca 315 SU 365 This oil city had developed out of the little fortress of Grozny.[2] Although Grozny oilfields had been discovered as early as 1833, they were hardly exploited at all in the nineteenth century. In 1912, however, they already supplied 11·5 per cent of the entire Russian oil. Between 1913 and 1917 this figure had risen to 16·7 per cent, and in the following four years to nearly 25 per cent. By 1937 the proportion of Grozny oil to total Russian oil production had fallen to 9·25 per cent, but in terms of absolute figures this output represented an increase of 234 per cent, compared to that before the First World War. The development of Grozny as an oil centre made for an increase of the population on an 'American scale'. In 1890 the place had no more than 6,000 inhabitants, against 34,067 in 1913, 97,095 in 1926 and 172,468 in 1939. It need hardly be added that the Chechens and Ingush, peoples consisting of shepherds and peasants, could not contribute anything worth mentioning to the rise of the town which was styled, almost ironically, 'Capital of the Chechen-Ingush A.S.S.R.'. Among the oilworkers of Grozny there were probably at no time more than one-tenth of 'natives', and until 1936 there were but 9·7 per cent.

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Ca 177 S.U. 583 Unlike so many cities in the Soviet Union, Grozny never changed its name under the Soviet régime, despite the imperialistic history connected with it. As a matter of fact, it was the Soviet oil city of Grozny which spelled the doom of the Chechens and not the little fortress which

1 [Cf. category 116, pp. 186-188, R1 Sov. Union: 21: Kolarz—Analyst]
2 [Cf. category 116, p. 186, R1 188 Sov. Union 21: Kolarz Analyst]

21: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1952 R1 Soviet Union R1
Caucasia RH1
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of the Assyrians, who had led the great migration. These platonic expressions of sympathy were of little help to the Assyrians. Transcaucasia was soon drawn into the turmoil of revolution and civil war and there was no Russian authority in existence which could be interested in the fate of the Assyrian people. S.U. 563 Ca. 563

It is not our task to follow up the further calvary of the Assyrians in Iraq, their recruitment into the famous Assyrian levies and the massacres of 1933 – we are concerned here only with the Russian aspect of the problem. Whilst the centre of gravity of the Assyrian nation was in Iraq, where the Mar Shimun had his residence, Soviet government circles claimed that the largest single group of Assyrians lived in the U.S.S.R. and thus, from the Russian point of view, the Assyrians had become one of the peoples of the Soviet Union.[51]

In 1935 the number of Assyrians in Russia was officially estimated at 50,000-60,000, but the 1939 census recorded not more than 20,000. They occupied eight villages in Transcaucasia and had also small colonies in Krasnodar, Rostov, Kiev, Leningrad and Moscow, where at one time over 2,000 Assyrians were counted. In all these places the Assyrians had their own national schools, and a special Assyrian section was established in the Teachers' Training College in the North Caucasus town of Armavir. Soviet Assyrians were looked after by a special Assyrian organization, 'Khoyadto', which both attended to their cultural needs and directed their mobilization for socialistic reconstruction work. S.U. 563 162

The Soviet Government found it a hard task to reconcile the Assyrian people with Bolshevik ideology, in view of their deep attachment to their ancient Nestorian Church. In April 1933, a statement of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee complained about 'undermining activities' which class-alien exploiting elements were alleged to have carried out amongst Soviet Assyrians. These 'elements' were said to have penetrated into Assyrian collective farms and cooperatives in an attempt to dominate them. S.U. 563 771 Ca. 563 771

The régime also found fault with the communists and Communist Youth League members who had been recruited amongst the Assyrians in 'considerable numbers', for even Assyrian communists seemed to have kept faith with their nation and its rich traditions. In the middle of the thirties the authorities turned against a number of Assyrian communists who had proved to be 'prisoners of family ties', and who had defended 'class enemies' because of their Assyrian nationality. These 'communists' had denied the necessity of class struggle inside the Assyrian people since they could not see any class divisions within a nation which had concentrated all its energies on its survival.[52] Ca. 563 665 186

Soviet philologists also tried to replace the 'archaic' Syriac alphabet of the Assyrians. At first they gave them a Russian alphabet, then, in 1930, a Latin alphabet. This had to be revised two years later because it was 'unsuitable' and in the end the Russian alphabet was re-introduced. S.U. 563 212